

**Improvements Are Needed in the  
Safety and Health Program to Fully  
Comply with Laws and Regulations**

**September 2002**

**Reference Number: 2002-10-179**

**This report has cleared the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration disclosure review process and information determined to be restricted from public release has been redacted from this document.**



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

INSPECTOR GENERAL  
for TAX  
ADMINISTRATION

September 25, 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF, AGENCY-WIDE SHARED SERVICES

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Pamela J. Gardiner".

FROM: Pamela J. Gardiner  
Acting Inspector General

SUBJECT: Final Audit Report - Improvements Are Needed in the Safety and Health Program to Fully Comply with Laws and Regulations  
(Audit # 200110053)

This report presents the results of our review of the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Safety and Health Program. The overall objective of this review was to evaluate whether the IRS has an effective safety and health program in place. We conducted this review as part of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration's (TIGTA) Fiscal Year (FY) 2002 Audit Plan.

The IRS has approximately 100,000 employees in 790 offices/facilities. It is responsible for providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for all its employees and complying with all mandated safety, health, and environmental rules and regulations.

In summary, the safety and health statistics relating to accidents and injuries, as well as lost time, indicate that the IRS is doing reasonably well; the occurrence rates are lower than the overall averages for federal government agencies. Additionally, the IRS' workers' compensation payments are at a lower rate than that of the Department of the Treasury as a whole. IRS employees accounted for about 67 percent of the total Treasury workforce but only 47 percent (\$146.8 million) of the total workman's compensation payments made (\$311.2 million) by the Treasury for FYs 1998 through 2001.

However, there are certain factors that negatively affect the ability of the IRS to fully comply with safety and health laws and regulations. The resources devoted to the program are significantly below the number recommended for the type of work performed at the IRS. Moreover, adequate training has not been provided to some safety officers and safety inspectors. This has resulted in safety evaluations and safety inspections not always being performed, abatement of hazards not always being

documented, and data not being tracked and trended. In addition, accidents and injuries are not always properly reported, recorded, and investigated. We recommended that the Chief, Agency-Wide Shared Services, ensure adequate resources and training are provided and that actions taken are adequately documented.

It is important to note that during our audit we reviewed cases and data from FY 2000 and 2001 but did not cover the actions taken by the IRS staff to respond to the hazards posed by the terrorist incidents of September 11, 2001, or the Anthrax threat that occurred later that year. The General Accounting Office and TIGTA are coordinating to assess the IRS' responses to these incidents.

Management's Response: IRS management agreed with our recommendations and is taking appropriate corrective actions. The corrective actions include assigning a full time safety officer to each campus site, computing center, and the IRS Headquarters; assigning safety inspectors to IRS locations; and establishing Safety Advisory Committees. Additional training will be developed and provided to safety officers and inspectors. The IRS will use the Safety and Health Information Management System to log and document unusual events. Management's complete response to the draft report is included as Appendix V.

Copies of this report are also being sent to the IRS managers who are affected by the report recommendations. Please contact me at (202) 622-6510 if you have questions or Daniel R. Devlin, Assistant Inspector General for Audit (Headquarters Operations and Exempt Organizations Programs), at (202) 622-8500.

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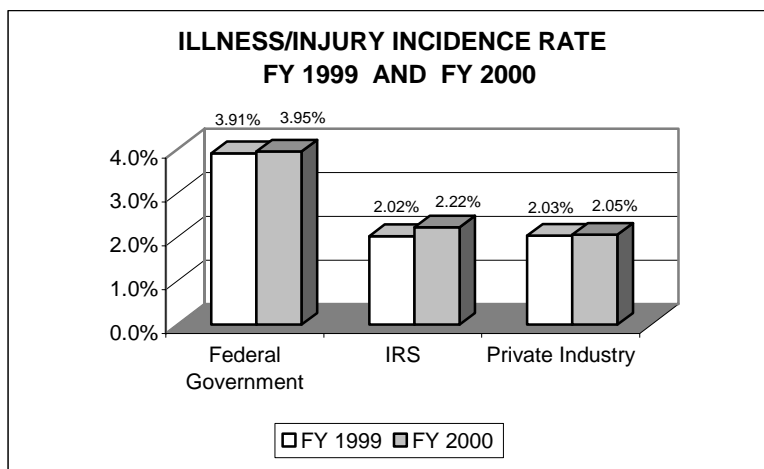
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## Improvements Are Needed in the Safety and Health Program to Fully Comply with Laws and Regulations

### Background

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is responsible for providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for all IRS employees. The IRS has approximately 100,000 employees in 790 offices/facilities. IRS employees accounted for about 67 percent of the total Treasury workforce<sup>1</sup> and 47 percent (\$146.8 million) of the total workman's compensation payments made (\$311.2 million) by the Treasury for Fiscal Years (FY) 1998 through 2001.<sup>2</sup> In January 2001, the Secretary of the Treasury, Paul O'Neill, issued a memorandum emphasizing his commitment to ensure the safety and health of all Treasury employees and to make safety a priority.

The following tables show the Department of Labor (DOL) statistics for FYs 1999 and 2000,<sup>3</sup> comparing all federal government agencies,<sup>4</sup> the IRS, and private service industries with work environments similar to that of the IRS.<sup>5</sup> The first table shows an illness/injury incidence rate<sup>6</sup> comparison. The IRS illness/injury incidence rate is similar to those of private industry and below the overall average of other federal government agencies.



Source: Department of Labor.

<sup>1</sup> The number of Treasury employees is approximately 150,000.

<sup>2</sup> The figure is cumulative; payments for injuries incurred prior to 1998 are included.

<sup>3</sup> FY 2001 data were not available at the time of the audit.

<sup>4</sup> Not including the U.S. Postal Service or youth and volunteers.

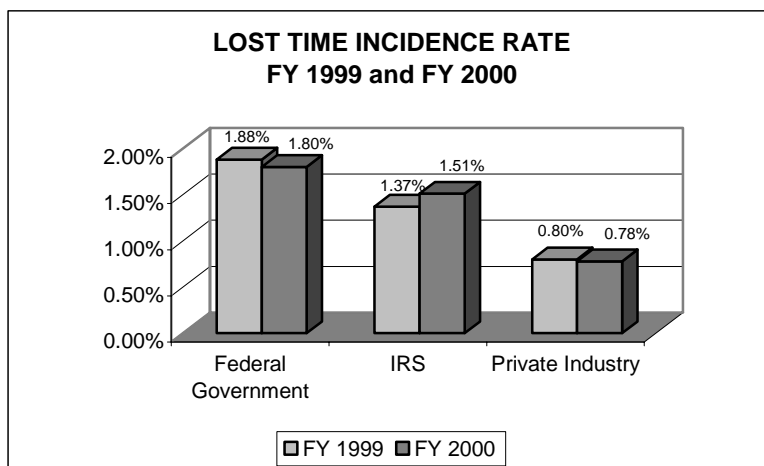
<sup>5</sup> Based on workers' compensation claims filed with the DOL.

<sup>6</sup> Illnesses/injuries divided by the number of IRS employees.

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The next table shows a lost time incidence rate comparison. The IRS' lost time incidence rate is higher than that of private industry but below the overall average of other federal government agencies.<sup>7</sup>



Source: Department of Labor.

The IRS is required to meet all mandated safety, health, and environmental rules and regulations promulgated by such agencies as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA),<sup>8</sup> Environmental Protection Agency, General Services Administration, and the Department of the Treasury. Internal directives are listed in the IRS' Internal Revenue Manual.<sup>9</sup>

The IRS has a decentralized safety and health program headed by the Director, Real Estate and Facilities Management (REFM), who is also the Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO).<sup>10</sup> To administer the program, the DASHO relies on staff within REFM as well as staff working under the direction of Senior Commissioner's Representatives (SCRs) and Commissioner's Representatives (CRs).

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<sup>7</sup> The number of lost time cases divided by the number of IRS employees.

<sup>8</sup> OSHA is an agency within the Department of Labor.

<sup>9</sup> IRM 1.14.5.1 (3).

<sup>10</sup> IRM 1.14.5.3 (1) and (2).

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The REFM staff is divided into five geographical areas. Each geographical area has several Facilities Management Officers (FMOs) who are responsible for the safety and health program in their local area. One or more safety officers report to each FMO. Each safety officer is responsible for carrying out the safety and health requirements for his or her specific area.

The SCRs and CRs have been designated to act on behalf of the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner in certain locations for cross-functional and other administrative matters. The role of the SCRs and CRs in the safety and health program is to assist the REFM in creating a proactive local safety program so that employees are aware of their roles and responsibilities and report safety violations that place employees at risk.

We performed our review of the IRS' safety and health program from August 2001 to July 2002. The cases and data reviewed were from FYs 2000 and 2001. We performed audit work at the IRS Headquarters Office in Washington, D.C., as well as the following three field sites:

- 1100 Commerce Building in Dallas, Texas.
- Andover Service Center in Andover, Massachusetts.
- Philadelphia Service Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

We also interviewed employees and reviewed certain cases at the Fresno Service Center in Fresno, California. The audit did not evaluate the IRS' response to the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, and the IRS' response to the Anthrax threat that occurred later that year. The General Accounting Office and Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) are coordinating to assess the IRS' response to these incidents. Our review was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*. We conducted this review as part of the TIGTA's Fiscal Year 2002 Audit Plan. Detailed information on our audit objective, scope, and methodology is presented in Appendix I. Major contributors to the report are listed in Appendix II.

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### Safety Evaluations and Inspections Were Not Always Performed As Required

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While the DOL workers' compensation claim statistics indicate that the IRS rates of work-related injuries and illnesses are lower than the overall average of federal agencies, there are areas in which the IRS is not complying with federal laws and regulations. These laws and regulations are intended to minimize work-related injuries and illnesses and to make sure they are accurately reported and properly investigated. The Code of Federal Regulations requires that federal agencies perform safety evaluations and inspections regularly to apprise management of safety and health risks so that action can be taken to eliminate or minimize these risks. However, the IRS does not perform these safety evaluations or inspections as required.

#### **Safety evaluations**

The IRS has 24 FMOs that are responsible for 790 IRS offices/facilities. The IRS *Occupational Safety and Health Handbook*,<sup>11</sup> (hereafter referred to as the IRS Handbook) requires each office to perform a periodic self-evaluation to determine the extent of its compliance with safety requirements. At the three field sites we visited, we determined that the required self-evaluations were not prepared.

Additionally, the IRS DASHO is required to evaluate the IRS' **overall** safety and health program as necessary to provide top management with accurate evaluations.<sup>12</sup> To meet an OSHA requirement to provide certain statistics related to the safety and health program, the DASHO submitted a report to the Treasury for FY 2001; however, in our opinion, the report did not evaluate the IRS' overall safety and health program. The FY 2001 report primarily covers statistical data, existing policies and procedures in place for the safety and health program, program accomplishments, and management action plans. The report did not set out the extent of the IRS' compliance with safety and health laws and regulations. For example, the report

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<sup>11</sup> Document 10853 (6-2000). This document contains laws, regulations, and directives applicable to the IRS' safety and health program. It is the sole and ultimate authority for specific policies and procedures in administering the program.

<sup>12</sup> IRM 1.14.5.3 (2) and Treasury Directive 71-05 (3)d.(3).



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requires an explanation of activities to recognize, evaluate, and control workplace safety and health hazards. The IRS commented on its workplace inspection program in a positive fashion but did not discuss whether the required inspections were completed. Another report requirement is to list the number of field reviews completed. The IRS only reported that an exact count was not maintained. An overall evaluation should provide information on the extent of compliance with safety and health laws and regulations.

The DASHO recently directed the development of a set of *REFM Program Review Guidelines* and a plan of program reviews. The reviews are designed to cover all 10 REFM programs<sup>13</sup> using a rotating team of approximately 4 members (3 Field Analysts and 1 National Office Analyst). Each review is planned to last approximately 4 days. The main focus will be to evaluate program effectiveness. An initial review was performed in December 2001, and each FMO will be reviewed once every other year. Still, it is unlikely that the time and resources provided for in the plan allow for an adequate evaluation of the safety and health program in addition to all nine other REFM programs. Without annual self-evaluations by each FMO, and an annual evaluation of the **overall** safety and health program by the DASHO, the IRS will not have an adequate assessment of its safety and health program.

### **Safety inspections**

To comply with federal requirements, the IRS Handbook requires all IRS workplaces, including office operations, to be inspected at least quarterly. These safety inspections are to be conducted by safety officers and inspectors. The SCRs and CRs are expected to assist by preparing Statements of Physical Hazards in Offices (Form 1775, also known as a safety inspection) and submitting them to REFM on a quarterly basis.

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<sup>13</sup> REFM programs include Space, Reimbursable Work Authorization, Foundation Information for Real Property Management, Property, Security, Safety; Records, Supplies, Copiers, and Mail.

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To determine whether safety inspections were performed quarterly and the required Forms 1775 submitted, we judgmentally selected 43 locations under the supervision of the safety officers at the 3 field sites we visited. Only 132 of the required 420 inspections (31 percent) were submitted for FY 2000, and only 94 of 424 (22 percent) were submitted for FY 2001.

### **Data are not tracked and trended**

At the three field sites we visited, formal safety hazard trend reports were not prepared and analyses of safety inspections were not performed. Safety officers did not maintain a database to capture hazardous conditions found during quarterly safety inspections. Data on trends are important to assist in making decisions about future safety inspections, whether additional training needs to be given in abatement procedures, or whether specific program action plans are needed.

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### **Safety Officials Did Not Always Document Whether Safety Hazards Had Been Abated**

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Treasury Directive 71-05 (3)b.(5) requires that unsafe and unhealthful working conditions be promptly identified and abated. IRS guidelines require that safety officers be notified of hazards that cannot be corrected locally or that would require an expense beyond the office's authority.

To test compliance with the prompt abatement requirement, we judgmentally selected a total of 90 Forms 1775 at the 3 field sites we visited. We determined that 56 of the 90 forms (62 percent) contained sufficient documentation to show that the hazards had been promptly abated. However, the remaining 34 Forms 1775 (38 percent) identifying a total of 68 hazards did not document whether the hazards were abated.<sup>14</sup> The majority of these hazards (53 percent) were at 1 location. In our opinion, the OSHA would classify all 68 hazards as serious violations. They included:

- Absence of fire alarms.

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<sup>14</sup> Based on follow-up information provided by the IRS on these hazards, 34 have been abated or are being addressed, 14 were not considered to be hazards by the reviewing safety officer, and 20 are still unabated.

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- Absence of fire exit signs and lights for fire exits.
- Absence of access to fire protective equipment.
- Fire extinguishers that had not been inspected.
- Hazards that could cause a person to fall.

This is critical as employees may continue to be at risk. The OSHA recently cited the U.S. Mint for similar hazards. Properly completed Forms 1775 are needed for REFM to take ownership of any unresolved hazards; otherwise, hazards that have been identified may not be promptly abated.

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### **Accidents and Injuries Were Not Timely Reported and Were Sometimes Not Properly Recorded or Investigated**

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#### **Reporting accidents**

An employee's supervisor is required to file an accident report (Form 9154) each time an employee has an accident, is injured, is fatally injured, or is exposed to environmental hazards. The Form 9154 must be completed within 48 hours (2 working days) of the accident or event. Additionally, the supervisor is to forward a copy of any workers' compensation claim form to the servicing safety officer. Annually, the agency is required to post a summary of injuries and illnesses that occurred in each workplace. The IRS is not fully complying with any of these requirements.

We reviewed a judgmental sample of 91 (approximately 30 from each site) accidents from FYs 2000 and 2001 to determine if the accident reports were timely filed. For 68 of the accidents (75 percent), a Form 9154 was not completed within the required 48 hours. The time for completing an accident report ranged from 3 to 142 days from the date of the accident. Delays in reporting make it more difficult to properly investigate and determine the cause of accidents so that hazards can be promptly abated. The timeliness and accuracy of the investigation is also important in maintaining an accurate record that can be used to evaluate claims or can be relied upon in litigation.

To determine if supervisors forwarded a copy of the workers' compensation claim forms to the servicing safety officers, we selected a judgmental sample of 53 claims in the IRS' Workers' Compensation Center database for

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FYs 2000 and 2001. For 68 percent of the claims filed, a copy of the claim was not in the safety officers' investigative file. As a result, there is no assurance as to whether the safety officer properly evaluated the claim.

At the three field sites we visited, two of the three safety officers prepared a sanitized copy (employee names and Social Security Numbers removed) of the accident log for FY 2000 only. None of the three sites prepared an annual summary (totals of injuries and illnesses for each workplace) as required for either FY 2000 or 2001.

### **Recording accidents**

All injuries and illnesses are required to be entered on an "Accident Log" containing 12 data elements within 6 working days, and any employee reports of unsafe or unhealthful working conditions are required to be maintained on an "Employee Complaint Log." None of the three safety officers maintained the required Employee Complaint Log. All 3 kept an Accident Log, but the logs did not contain all 12 of the required data elements.

From a sample of 91 accidents, 16 had not been entered in the Accident Log and 25 of the accidents entered on the log either did not describe the injury/illness and body part affected or the description given was incorrect. In addition, 83 percent of the accidents were recorded on an outdated Form 9154 which did not contain all 12 data elements required by the OSHA. Even the IRS Form 9154 that was current at the time used (Revised August 2000) does not show two data elements required by the OSHA. The two data elements not included were "Injuries – First aid/medical treatment (no lost time) cases" and "Illnesses/Diseases – First aid/medical treatment (no lost time) cases."

Moreover, there was another indicator at one of the three sites we visited that not all work-related injuries and illnesses had been entered on the "Accident Log." At this site, each time an employee visits the health unit for treatment of a job-related injury/illness, the health unit staff forwards a "Notice of Injury" to the safety officer. The safety officer is responsible for recording the injury/illness

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on the “Accident Log” and following up with the employee and the employee’s supervisor to secure an accident report. We compared the number of “Notice of Injury” forms from the health unit to the “Accident Log” maintained by the safety officer and determined that the log understated the number of injuries/illnesses by 38 percent in FY 2000 and by 26 percent in FY 2001.

Accident logs and employee complaint logs are intended for use to identify trends, to issue functional reports to managers, and to prepare the annual summary of accidents and injuries for each workplace. Incomplete, non-existent, and inaccurate logs could result in OSHA citations and do result in inaccurate trend information and reports to managers. Without accurate trend data, actions may not be taken to prevent certain types of accidents, increasing the risk for additional accidents and injuries.

### **Investigating accidents**

Safety officers are responsible for conducting accident investigations and maintaining official records of investigation results. From the sample of 91 Forms 9154, there were 27 accidents (30 percent) which resulted from a condition that required corrective action to prevent further accidents at the site. Of these 27 accidents, 12 (44 percent) were investigated and corrective actions were taken. For the remaining 15 accidents (56 percent) there was no documentation to show whether the safety officer had investigated the accident or that action had been taken to correct the hazardous condition. Unresolved hazards place employees at continued risk of injury or illness.

IRM 1.14.5.4 (1) requires that certain “Unusual Events,” as defined in IRM 1.14.5.6 (1), be reported to the Department of Labor, through the Department of the Treasury, within 8 hours of the event. Unusual events may include:

- Unresolved indoor air quality cases or reports of “Sick Building Syndrome” or “Building Related Diseases.”
- Suspected, alleged, or confirmed outbreaks of contagious diseases.
- Reports of Legionnaires’ Disease among employees.

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### **Unusual Events Were Generally Handled Appropriately but Were Not Reported to the Department of Labor**

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- Disturbance of asbestos that could result in evacuation of IRS space.
- Chemical, toxic, or hazardous material incident, which may require building evacuation, worksite monitoring, medical surveillance, or cleanup advice.

During our review three unusual events were brought to our attention. It was alleged that three separate employees had contracted Legionnaires' disease at three separate IRS facilities during FYs 1997 through 2001. The three facilities were the Fresno Service Center in Fresno, California; the 1114 Commerce Street building in Dallas, Texas; and the Orange Avenue building in Fresno, California.

For each of the three unusual events, we determined that IRS officials followed OSHA guidelines when the cases were brought to their attention. OSHA guidelines suggest that the course of action chosen during an investigation of a facility be based on the degree of certainty that the site is the source of a reported illness. The responsible officials are required to exercise their own professional judgment in deciding the appropriate course of action.

In our opinion, the IRS exercised proper professional judgment and took the appropriate investigative action in accordance with OSHA guidelines for all three incidents, except that there was no documentation to show that any of the three cases had been reported to the Department of Labor through the Department of the Treasury as required.

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### **Additional Resources and Training Are Needed to Comply with Safety and Health Laws, Regulations, and Directives**

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Overall, the conditions cited in this report are due to the insufficient resources devoted to the program and to the incomplete training of the safety officers and safety inspectors. The IRS National Headquarters safety and health staff is made up of only four staff members overseen by the Chief, Safety and Security. Two of the staff members are Industrial Hygienists and two are Certified Professional Ergonomists. As of August 1, 2001, REFM had only 28 primary safety officers on roll, and some of these primary safety officers also have collateral duties outside the safety and health area.

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With approximately 100,000 employees located in approximately 790 facilities, the IRS has a ratio of 1 primary safety officer for each 3,571 employees, or 1 primary safety officer for every 28 facilities. A recent U. S. Naval study suggests a ratio of a minimum of 1 safety and health officer to every 500 employees that work in moderate hazard level jobs (e.g., manual material handling/lifting, building maintenance, warehouse operations, etc.) or 1 safety and health officer to every 600 employees that work in low hazard level jobs (e.g., those positions that involve primary work in an office environment but may include visits to worksites for inspections or evaluations). The majority of jobs in the IRS fall into what the Naval study classified as low hazard level jobs. The Department of the Treasury's safety and health officer supports the 1/500 ratio.

Safety officers are responsible for 5 major duties and 13 additional duties (See Appendix IV for details). To supplement the efforts of the safety officers, the IRS' major business units<sup>15</sup> (through the SCRs and CRs) are expected to provide adequate staff to support the safety and health program. In a June 18, 2001, memorandum the IRS Deputy Commissioner reminded the business units of their responsibility to honor the SCRs' requests for resources. One specific requirement of the SCRs/CRs is to prepare a Form 1775 and submit it to REFM on a quarterly basis. However, the memorandum did not appear to have a significant effect in this area, since there was a decline in the percentage of required safety inspections completed from 31 percent in FY 2000 to 22 percent FY 2001.

Some safety officers and safety inspectors have not received training. We determined that 5 of the 28 safety officers had not received the required safety and health training. Further, 5 of the 17 safety inspectors that responded to our questionnaire (at the 3 field sites we visited) had not received the required training. Safety officer's training includes IRS procedures for reporting, evaluating, and

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<sup>15</sup> There are four major business units: Wage and Investment, Small Business/Self-Employed, Large and Mid-Size Business, and Tax Exempt and Government Entities.

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abating hazards; reporting and investigating agency reprisal; recognition of hazardous conditions and environments; identification and use of occupational safety and health standards; and other appropriate rules and regulations. Safety inspector's training includes preparing, conducting, and documenting safety inspections and how to implement and follow up on corrective actions.

To address training and provide other information related to the program, REFM remodeled its Occupational Safety and Health web page in September 2001. It provides policies, training, procedures, and current safety information to all employees. REFM piloted web-based training for safety personnel and made it widely available in March 2002. This web-based training is expected to provide quality training at low cost and reduce total training time.

### **Recommendations**

The Chief, AWSS, the DASHO, and, as needed, the Deputy Commissioner should:

1. Ensure that sufficient emphasis is given to the safety and health program and staff are assigned on a full time or collateral basis to bring the IRS into compliance with laws, regulations, and directives relating to safety inspections and the reporting, recording, and investigating of accidents/injuries.

Management's Response: IRS management has assigned a full time safety officer to all campus sites, computing centers, and the IRS Headquarters. SCRs are to ensure safety inspectors are assigned to the other locations. The role of the SCRs, including their responsibility to establish the Safety Advisory Committees, will be expanded in the orientation program scheduled for FY 2003.

2. Provide the required training to all safety officers and safety inspectors.

Management's Response: E-learning modules have been developed for safety and health training and a Continuing Professional Education course was held in



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May 2002. Additional training will be developed, including a Root Cause Analysis course that is scheduled for October 2002 and an Interactive Video Training session scheduled to air in February 2003.

3. Ensure that appropriate officials are aware of the reporting requirements for “Unusual Events” cases and that all actions on these types of cases are adequately documented.

Management’s Response: The Safety and Health Information Management System will be used to log and document “Unusual Events.”

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### **Appendix I**

#### **Detailed Objective, Scope, and Methodology**

The objective of our audit was to evaluate whether the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has an effective safety and health program in place. To do so, we determined whether the IRS Headquarters has an effective means of communicating program directives and tracking the implementation and effectiveness of the programs. Next, we determined whether safety officers and safety inspectors, at the three sites we visited, perform their duties effectively and in accordance with laws, regulations, and directives. Also, we determined the accuracy of data provided by the national Workers' Compensation Claims database. Finally, we determined how the IRS' "Illnesses/Injury Incidence Rate" and "Lost Time Incidence Rate" during both Fiscal Years (FY) 1999 and 2000 (the latest information provided by the Department of Labor) compared with the rates of private industry and federal agencies. Specifically, we:

- A. Interviewed the Headquarters staff of Real Estate and Facilities Management.
- B. Interviewed Facility Management Officers, safety officers, and other safety and health personnel. Reviewed the programs, initiatives, and other actions to promote safer, healthier work environments and how the effectiveness of the safety and health program is tracked.
- C. Identified 28 safety inspectors serving the 3 locations audited and sent questionnaires to them concerning their training, safety inspections, and abatement procedures for hazards identified. Only 17 qualifying safety inspectors responded to the questionnaire.
- D. Using interval sampling, selected 91 of 843 recorded accidents that occurred during FYs 2000 and 2001 and reviewed them for compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and directives.
- E. Judgmentally selected a sample of 43 out of 116 locations and compared the number of safety inspections required with the number of safety inspections sent to the servicing safety officer in FYs 2000 and 2001.
- F. Judgmentally selected a sample of 90 out of 247 safety inspections that identified approximately 354 hazards during FYs 2000 and 2001 to determine if the hazards were promptly abated.
- G. Using the cases selected in audit step D, identified 53 that were recorded on the workers' compensation claims database. We compared the data recorded in the database for the 53 cases to the hard copy information contained in the safety officers' investigative files to determine the accuracy of the database.
- H. Extracted statistical information concerning claims and incidence rates from the Department of Labor's web page for FY 1997 through FY 2000 and compared IRS

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statistical results with those of other federal agencies and private industry providing similar services. (Note: FY 2001 data were not available at the time of the audit.)

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**Appendix II**

**Major Contributors to This Report**

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**Appendix III**

**Report Distribution List**

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    Chief, Agency-Wide Shared Services A

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### **Appendix IV**

#### **Safety Officers' Duties**

##### **Major Duties:**

- Knowing and complying with safety and health laws and regulations, including areas such as safety and health equipment, lighting, fire emergencies, ergonomics, indoor air quality, bloodborne pathogens, radon, and hazardous materials.
- Recommending, implementing, and following up on physical hazards reported during quarterly inspections.
- Conducting accident investigations and maintaining official records of investigation results.
- Maintaining a log of injuries and illnesses that occur in the workplace.
- Identifying trends from the log of injuries to determine where emphasis is needed in preventing accidents.

##### **Additional Duties:**

- Understanding and carrying out Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Environmental Protection Agency, Department of the Treasury, General Service Administration, and other agency laws, regulations, and directives relating to the safety and health program.
- Aiding in the preparation of periodic self-evaluations to determine the extent of compliance with all applicable safety and health laws, regulations, and directives.
- Providing managers with costs and reports associated with accidents, injuries, illnesses, and the justification needed to modify practices and conditions to produce a safe and healthy work environment.
- Ensuring that work spaces are inspected at least quarterly.
- Identifying and training safety inspectors.
- Maintaining Statements of Physical Hazards in Offices (Form 1775, also known as a safety inspection) for a minimum of 5 years.
- Coordinating OSHA site visits.
- Preparing and posting an annual summary of injuries and illnesses for each workplace.
- Developing and implementing a promotional plan for increasing employee awareness of good safety and health behavior as well as risks of potential workplace hazards in hopes of effecting changes in behavior.

**Improvements Are Needed in the Safety and Health Program  
to Fully Comply with Laws and Regulations**

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- Ensuring that Safety Advisory Committees are established, trained, and functioning.
- Assisting the Safety Advisory Committees in the performance of their duties.
- Maintaining a log of employee complaints of potentially unsafe or unhealthy working conditions.
- Acting as a critical mediator between ailing, irritated, or frightened employees and management.

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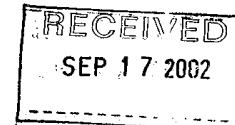
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**Appendix V**

**Management's Response to the Draft Report**



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20224



SEP 17 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR PAMELA J. GARDINER  
DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AUDIT

FROM:

*Raymond E. Wiggins*  
[For] Ronald R. Stephen  
Director, Real Estate and Facilities Management

SUBJECT:

Draft TIGTA Audit Report #2001-10-053, Improvements are needed in the Safety and Health Program to fully comply with Laws and Regulations, dated August 16, 2002

I have reviewed your report and agree with the recommendations. Attached are corrective actions that address the three recommendations.

Employee safety and health is a primary concern of Commissioner Rossotti and Agency-Wide Shared Services (AWSS). To further address program issues, we detailed a senior executive from the Small Business/Self Employed business unit and additional field personnel to our Real Estate and Facilities Management (REFM) Division to form a team with the safety and health staff. This team will develop a business case that supports and addresses strategic planning, concept of operations, and identify funding needs for the safety and health program. The team will also assess ways to enhance the Safety and Health Information Management Systems (SHIMS). SHIMS is a Treasury web based filing program. Its purpose is to help reduce injuries and lost work days, encourage return to work as soon as possible after injuries, and allow easy reporting of work injuries and safety incidents. SHIMS has been instrumental in helping us identify causes of incidents to reduce and prevent lost time cases.

As your report noted, training is essential to the Safety and Health program. Accordingly, we have developed and delivered training in a variety of media to accommodate different learning needs and styles. For example, we provide, in hard copy and on the web, self-learning vehicles, such as: "A Practical Guide to Ergonomics" (web accessible as of September 2002) and a "Safety Officer's Manual". Eighteen E-learning modules of the Safety Officer Manual are available for access on the web and five more modules are in progress. Refer to Recommendation 2, corrective action 2 in the attachment for additional information.



## **Improvements Are Needed in the Safety and Health Program to Fully Comply with Laws and Regulations**

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We also developed a safety web page to educate employees and videos for “just in time” learning on Ergonomics, Accident Investigation, and Safety Inspector training. In May 2002, we gave Safety Officers a copy of each video and conducted in-class training on many safety/health topics for 33 safety personnel. We developed interactive video training (IVT) for all managers and NTEU stewards/officials titled, “A Manager’s Guide to Preventing Aggression in the Workplace”, which aired on February 5, 2002, eight rebroadcasts occurred in May and June to a wider audience. Other Treasury Bureaus have requested copies of these products.

In addition to these efforts, other safety and health initiatives and achievements include:

- Conducting bioterrorism Risk Assessments (e.g., anthrax sampling in mailrooms)
- Conducting medical evaluations and personal protection fit-testing, and evaluating Local Exhaust Ventilation Equipment for automated and manual mail opening activities
- Developing procedures for gloves, respirators and lab coats usage, and established bioterrorism response procedures with local Hazmat Responders
- Implementing new procedures for IRS operations and maintenance of plumbing systems to reduce Legionnaire’s Disease potential
- Piloting and training four Crisis Prevention Teams (The teams and training information will assist managers in the early identification of potential problems and provide guidance on intervention strategies.)
- Developing, piloting, training, and assessing campus on-site ergonomic problem-solving team (The team, located at the Fresno Submission Processing Center, includes a representative from each business function and team members will assist employees in identifying and correcting stress inducing conditions or situations that could impact productivity.)
- Designing and conducting scientific ergonomic studies such as usability evaluation of mail-sort tables (redesign impacts approx. 4,000 employees), ergonomic specifications for Document Perfection/Error Resolution work tables, efficacy of ergonomic environments, and studies on supplemental work breaks
- Developing and conducting annual safety officer training (e.g., currently developing course on identifying/addressing the root cause analyses of injury and accident for safety officers at all FMO sites) and developing IVT for local Safety & Health Advisory Committees

If you have additional questions, please contact me at (202) 283-9400. For matters addressing audit follow-up and liaison, please call Greg Rehak at (202) 622-3702.

Attachment

## **Improvements Are Needed in the Safety and Health Program to Fully Comply with Laws and Regulations**

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**RECOMMENDATION 1:** The Chief, AWSS, and the DSHO and, as needed, the Deputy Commissioner should ensure that sufficient emphasis is given to the safety and health program and staff are assigned on a full time or collateral basis to bring the IRS into compliance with laws, regulations, and directives relating to safety inspections; and the reporting, recording and investigating of accidents/injuries.

**CORRECTIVE ACTION 1:** The Commissioner directed each campus to have at least one full time Safety Officer assigned to this program. Effective August 26, 2002, all campus sites, computing centers, and the IRS Headquarters have a full time safety officer assigned them. As a result of the modernization, Senior Commissioner Representatives (SCR's) and Submission Processing Site Coordinators are to ensure that Safety Inspectors are assigned to approximately 780 locations. Inspectors are business unit employees responsible for reporting hazardous or unsafe conditions at the workplace. Due to frequent changes in Inspectors, ongoing training will be provided through E-learning modules.

**COMPLETION DATE:** August 26, 2002

**CORRECTIVE ACTION 2:** The National Agreement between IRS and NTEU designates the SCR with responsibility to establish a Safety Advisory Committee for each facility. The Safety Advisory Committee is responsible for recommending an annual safety and health plan for the facility or facilities overseen as well as the number of safety inspections. It is also responsible for ensuring the proper preparation of Form 1775 by safety personnel, reviewing and recommending corrective actions for all incident/accident reports and Worker's Compensation claims. To emphasize the importance their role, these aspects of the SCR position will be added to the agenda for the SCR orientation program scheduled for first quarter of fiscal year 2003, and to the Administrative Officer CPE scheduled for September 2002.

**PROPOSED COMPLETION DATE:** December 31, 2002

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:** Director, Real Estate and Facilities Management, AWSS

## **Improvements Are Needed in the Safety and Health Program to Fully Comply with Laws and Regulations**

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**RECOMMENDATION 2:** Provide the required training to all safety officers and safety inspectors.

**CORRECTIVE ACTION 1:** The National Office Safety and Health team and the National Safety and Health Advisory Committee are developing an Interactive Video Training (IVT), which will air February 2003. The course will provide safety training to approximately 60 local safety and health advisory committees. Emphasis will be given to developing and promoting the local safety and health programs.

**PROPOSED COMPLETION DATE:** February 28, 2003

**CORRECTIVE ACTION 2:** We developed eighteen E-learning modules for safety and health training. These modules were adapted from the Safety Officer Manual, and five additional modules are under development. Modules are required training and are accessible through the Real Estate Learning Institute and the Safety and Health Web page. E-modules include:

- Safety Inspector (completed January 2002)
- Personal protective equipment, Accident Investigation, Flexi-place, Water Quality (completed April 2002)
- Confined Spaces, Basic Electricity, Controlling Hazardous Energy Sources (completed July 2002),
- Fire Prevention, Employee First Aid (completed July 2002)
- Local Safety and Health Advisory Committee training (completed September 2002)

**COMPLETION DATE:** September 9, 2002

**CORRECTIVE ACTION 3:** We conducted the annual Continuing Professional Education course on May 2002 in Arlington, Virginia for 33 safety personnel. The National Safety and Health Team members, other IRS field staff, Department of Treasury personnel, and invited outside speakers addressed many safety and health issues.

**COMPLETION DATE:** May 14, 2002

**CORRECTIVE ACTION 4:** We will develop a Root Cause Analysis course on the reporting, recording, and investigation of accidents and injuries. Thirty-five people will receive 16 hours of intensive training in conducting root cause analyses to reduce and prevent incidents and injuries. We have scheduled the course for October 2002 in Dallas, Texas

**PROPOSED COMPLETION DATE:** October 28, 2002

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:** Director, Real Estate and Facilities Management, AWSS

## **Improvements Are Needed in the Safety and Health Program to Fully Comply with Laws and Regulations**

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**RECOMMENDATION 3:** Ensure that appropriate officials are aware of the reporting requirements for "Unusual Events" cases and that all actions on these types of cases are adequately documented.

**CORRECTIVE ACTION 1:** We comply with OSHA regulations for reporting "Unusual Events" by telephonically providing information to Treasury and the Department of Labor. Additionally, based on the above recommendation, we have established a written procedure to log and document "Unusual Events" using the Safety and Health Information Management System (SHIMS).

**PROPOSED COMPLETION DATE:** September 6, 2002

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:** Director, Real Estate and Facilities Management, AWSS